

Pierre Menard House,  
Fort Kaskaskia, STATE PARK  
FORT CASE, Illinois.  
Pawnee Co. ?

HABS No. ILL-286

HABS  
ILL,

79-FORGA,

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Central Illinois

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**  
CENTRAL UNIT—ST. LOUIS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Edgar E. Lundeen, District Officer  
602 Corn Belt Bank Bldg., Bloomington, Illinois.

Addendum to  
Pierre Menard House  
County Highway 6  
Fort Gage  
Randolf County  
Illinois

HABS No. IL-286

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
PIERRE MENARD HOUSE

Location: On County Highway 6, Fort Gage (Fort Kaskaskia State Park), Randolph County, Illinois

Present Owner: State of Illinois

Present Use: Historic house museum open to the public

Significance: The first owner of the house, Pierre Menard, was a successful French-Canadian trader and the first Lieutenant Governor of Illinois. As a one and one-half story framed house built in the French Colonial tradition, it features a wide veranda supported by stone pillars and an exposed stone basement. A stone kitchen is connected to the house by a breezeway. Many of the original Menard furnishings are still associated with the home and it is open for public tours. A two-story brick smokehouse and stone springhouse on the grounds enhance the cultural setting. It was named a National Historic Landmark in 1970 and later listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1802. Built by Joseph Champagne for Pierre Menard.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Purchased 1902 by Louis Younger. Acquired by the State of Illinois in 1927.

B. Historical Context:

Pierre Menard was one of the most powerful and influential people in the Illinois county, and his house one of the largest and most richly finished. Originally the house was separated by a narrow stream from Kaskaskia, the leading settlement in the area in the mid-eighteenth century, a position Kaskaskia lost to Ste. Genevieve toward the end of the century. In the late nineteenth century, the course of the Mississippi changed, and what had been the narrow stream became the main channel of the Mississippi. The original site of Kaskaskia was entirely destroyed, leaving the Menard house isolated and facing the river.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a large example of

vertical log construction on a stone foundation, what the French called "poteaux sur sole." Its plan, general form, and detail are characteristic of creole architecture.

2. Condition of fabric: very good. The house is well maintained and has been given extensive restoration by the State of Illinois.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: One and one half stories on an exposed stone basement, 71'-5" across the front by 43'-6".
2. Foundations: Random cut stone, painted white.
3. Walls: Vertical, hewn, white oak logs, mortised into a sill, infilled with bouzillage, plastered or sheathed with horizontal clapboards.
4. Structural system, framing: poteaux-sur-sole, traditional French framing.
5. Porches: A French colonial gallery on three sides of the house with a breezeway that joins the kitchen to the rear house.
6. Chimneys: Three original chimneys each carry a separate fireplace. Large cooking fireplace and bake oven in the detached kitchen.
7. Openings: Principal entrances at the center of both long sides open into rooms at the center of the house. Secondary entrances open into the rooms at the east and west ends.
  - a. Doorways and doors: panelled doors. Main entrances have two leaf doors of three panels each, and rectangular transom lights.
  - b. Windows and shutters: double hung windows, with six, nine and twelve light sash.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: wood shingles.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: No eave projection, boxed in plate at eave line of the porch.
  - c. Dormers: original dormers, gabled roofed, with six light double hung sash.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: 8 room house plan with large central room at entrance separating two larger rooms each with a fireplace, and with five rooms across the rear.
- b. Cellar: exposed basement.
- c. Attic: large unfinished attic space.

2. Stairways: exposed stairway from center, rear room leads to attic.

3. Flooring: wood.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: plastered walls, ceilings sheated with wood.

5. Openings:  
Doorways and doors: panelled doors, molded door transom.

6. Decorative features and trim: molded chair rail, baseboard and cornice. Fireplaces have Federal style wood mantles, all different.

7. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Modern heating, air conditioning, and lighting.
- b. Plumbing: The detached kitchen is fully equipped, including a cooking fireplace and bake oven. Modern plumbing for visitors in detached separate quarters. Kitchen equipment includes a stone sink.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The house is part of the Fort Kaskaskia State Park.
- 2. Outbuildings: Stone kitchen, two-story brick smokehouse, stone springhouse.

E. In the attic of the Menard house, the entrance doorway from the nearby Elias Kent Kane house, Elscrow, Illinois, is stored. The doorway was recovered when the Kane house burned in June, 1985. It is a more elaborate version of the entrance doorway on the Menard house, enframed with pilasters, and of about the same period. The field note

book for the Menard house includes detailed measurements of the doorway, but it was not drawn for HABS.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Secondary and published sources:

Ekberg, Carl J., Colonial Ste. Genevieve, An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier (Gerald, Missouri: The Patrice Press, 1985).

Guide to Historic Places in Southwestern Illinois (Illinois Department of Conservation, 1979), p. 28.

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) team of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, under the direction of Historical Architect Thomas G. Keohan. Documentation was carried out during the summer of 1985 at the HABS field office in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, by project supervisor Osmund Overby (University of Missouri-Columbia), project architects James Q. Marsh (Hemet, California), William D. Cesaletti (Keaau, Hawaii), and Terance A. Gruenhagen (North Dakota State University), and project historian Claudia A. Barbero (University of Missouri-Columbia).

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